THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is envisaged that the private entrepreneur under the BOT Scheme who will invest in the construction of the road will be entitled to collect and retain fees for a specified period. Thereafter, the asset will stand transferred to the Government. The period for which toll is imposed will depend upon several factors like cost of scheme, traffic levels, return expected by the entrepreneur, interest during the construction period, quantum of toll, etc.

(c) to (f) There are no constraints in continuing the toll after the expiry of the initial stipulated period to cover amongst others the cost of maintenance. Otherwise, the maintenance cost would be met from budgetary allocation.

Meeting of North Eastern Council in Delhi

957. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meeting of the North Eastern Council (NEC) was held on November 16, 1995 in Delhi; and

(b) if so, the names of the members who attended the meeting and the subjects discussed therein and the conclusions arrived at?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (PROF. M. KAMSON): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) The following Governors and Chief Ministers of the North Eastern states, who are the Members of the Council attended the Council Meeting on 16th November, 1995 in Delhi.

(1) Shri Mata Prasad, Governor, Arunachal Pradesh (Chairman), (2) Shri Loknath Mishra, Governor, Assam (3) Shri M.M Jacob, Governor, Meghalaya (4) Shri O.N. Srivastava, Governor, Nagaland (5) Shri P.R. Kyndiah, Governor, Mizoram, (6) Prof. S. Prasad, Governor, Tripura, (7) Shri Gegong Apang, Chief Minister, Arunachal Pradesh, (8) Shri Hiteshwar saikia, Chief Minister, Assam, (9) Shri S.C. Marak, Chief Minister, Meghalaya, (10) Shri Rishang Keishing, Chief Minister, Manipur, (11) Shri Lalthan Hawla, Chief Minister, Mizoram, (12) Shri S.C. Jamir, Chief Minister, Nagaland, (13) Shri Dasratha Deb, Chief Minister, Tripura, in addition, Shri S.B.Chavan, Union Home Minister, and Prof. M. Kamson, Minister Of State (Home) also participated.

Subjects discussed in the meeting included among others, Physical and Financial Review of the NEC Plan Schemes 1993-94 and 1994-95, NEC Revised Estimate for 1995-96; proposed Annual Plan for 1996-97? Status Reports on Transport & Communication, Power and Technical Education as well as initiatives to be taken in the North Eastern Region in the context of the new Economic policy; role of NEC in the development of North East region, etc. Some of the important decisions taken/ adopted in the meeting including those regarding timely completion of priority roads identified for special funding during the VIIIth Plan period; approval of Annual Plan proposals for the year 1996-97 of Rs. 712.86 crores, the need for provision of sufficient resources through the Ministry of Civil Aviation for the development of an efficient network of airports in the region; timely operation of flights of Indian Airlines, connecting the state capitals by air services to Guwhati and Delhi, the need for a special economic and industrial policy for the North East Region in view of the new Economic Policy of the Government, provision of necessary resources for the conservation of bio-diversity and development of such conservation projects which may also be economically viable in the region etc. Proposal for Community Resources Management Project for Upland Areas under the

International Fund for Agricultural Development was also approved. Some other decisions were in respect of the funding of the Regional Institute of Medical sciences, Imphal; giving more importance to the agriculture and allied sectors by providing full time Advisers in Horticulture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry in the NEC Secretariat, and posting of officers for the NEC Secretariat to be made attractive by providing special incentives to attract talent from throughout the country. It was also decided to urge the Central Government to give high priority for early completion of the Jogighopa Bridge over River Brahmaputra.

Review of National forest Policy

958. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are reviewing the present National Forest Policy; if so, the salient features thereof; and

(b) whether it is a fact that several individuals and the NCPCLR have opposed the proposal to lease out forest lands to industrial houses; if so, what are the main points made therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) A proposal for "Involvement of Industry in Afforestation of degraded Forest Land", which incorporates certain modifications in the National Forest Policy, 1988 is under consideration of the Government.

The main apprehension expressed by the various agencies opposing the proposal are as under:

(i) Leasing and diversion of rich forest land for captive monoculture plantations.

(ii) Depriving of the tribals and rural folk of their traditional rights.

(iii) Joint forest management and other people's participation scheme will suffer.

(iv) Farmers who have gone in for agro-forestry on their private land will be deprived of market for their produce since industry's would prefer to plant up degraded forest land.

(v) The scheme will result in fragmentation of forests as industry will want to grab patches as and where they like.

Recognition of Hindi as Official Language of the UN

959. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of India's permanent membership of the Security Council and at what levels the PM raised the issue and with what results;

(b) whether Government have recently taken up initiative for the recognition of Hindi as the official language of the UN;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, whether Government has at any stage taken up the issue formally; and

(e) if so, the present status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L.BHATIA): (a) Question of Security Council restructuring is being discussed in a Working Group set up by UN General Assembly. India has expressed willingness to serve as permanent member of the Seeurity Council. PM has raised the issue in his bilateral discussions with several world leaders.

(b) to (e) The introduction of Hindi as an official UN language has engaged the attention of the Government for several years. Introduction of a new UN language requires majority support of member states in addition to large financial implications. Our consultations